

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 9, 10, 17, and 20, and cancel claims 1-4, 6-8, 13, 14, 16, and 19 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. Claims 9-12, 17, 18, and 20-22 are now pending in this application.

In the Office Action,¹ the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-8, 13, 14, 16, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saylor et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,487,139). The Examiner also objected to claims 9-12, 17, 18, and 20-22 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in this case.

Although Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of claims 1-4, 6-8, 13, 14, 16, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), in an effort to expedite prosecution, Applicants have canceled the rejected claims. Furthermore, Applicants have rewritten objected to claims 9, 10, 17, and 20 in independent form to include all of the elements of each claim's base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 11 and 12 depend directly or indirectly from rewritten claim 10; claim 18 depends from rewritten claim 17; and claims 21 and 22 depend directly or indirectly from rewritten claim 9. Accordingly, claims 11, 12, 18, 21, and 22 are allowable at least due to their dependence from allowable claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in *prima facie* condition for allowance and request that the Examiner allow claims 9-12, 17, 18, and 20-22.

¹ The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Final Office Action.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: May 1, 2006

By: Anthony J. Lombardi
Anthony J. Lombardi
Reg. No. 53,232